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Obituary ()

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The Far Away

By

Guy Nearing

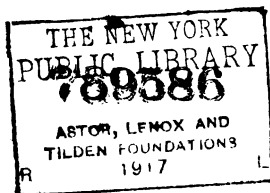


NEW YORK
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G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press

1917

013



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The Knickerbocker Press, New York

CONTENTS

	PAGE
MANKIND	1
ISA	2
THE MOUERNERS	7
REST NOT!	8
MYSTERY	9
THE GOAL OF THE STARS	10
POET'S PRAYER	11
HARMONIES	12
IMMORTALITY	13
ROSALIE	14
WHAT LOVE IS.	16
LOVE AND SORROW	17
THE HEART OF MAN	18
SOLACE	20
FLOWERS	21
LYSIA	23
YEW	25
THE WARDER	27
THE VIKINGS	32

Putnam's, Sept. 13/17.

	PAGE
SLOTH	33
PURPOSE	36
THE POWER OF HOME	37
DISILLUSION	38
THE TIDE	39
THE HILLS OF HOME	40
TO A HERMIT THRUSH	42
LEAF-GOLD	45
THE ISLE	46
THE PALACE OF MIST	48
THE CROSS	50
THE VAULT OF YEARS	52

The Far Away

THE FAR AWAY

MANKIND

I SEE a spirit like a child playing
In a vast November wood,
Who tires his thoughtful fancy with assaying
By infant hardihood
To build a living tree, as he conceives,
Out of a pile of autumn-drifted leaves.

ISA

JAHAN the proud, long marvelled he
At spires and jewelled masonry.
"Send Isa forth!" The builder came,
With little heed of pomp or fame,
To where, above the Jumna, stood
The Emperor in exalted mood.

Among dim cedarn gardens rose
His curd-white marbles, wall on wall,
And culminous golden domes to those.
Wide groves dipped riverwards away,
With fountain cool and waterfall;
Urn-bordered pathways farther lay
Along the cliff, and shuddering shunned
With balustrades the abyss beyond.
The builder of this palace rare
Paced calmly to the cliffside where
Stood Jahan by his ivory chair.

"What king on earth," the Emperor cried,
"Can match my palace or my bride?"

The Far Away

3

Be near me, Empress; watch with me
The sunshine wooing spire and tree.
Gem-woven are the halls within,
Whose joys this coming night shall win,
With all its thousand lights aglow.
This palace have I reared for thee—
And I would bid the builder go,
Who all things wrought so peerlessly.”

Then petulant the Empress sighed,
“Jahan, you lightly praise your bride,
In lauding of your dwelling more.
If never palace was before
Throughout the world so perfect, still
A better waits on Isa's will.
One only bridal moon shall be
For us in all eternity.”

“Speak, Isa—could your genius build
A second palace—one so filled
With every splendour known to man?
Could you in equal grandeur plan,
With equal skill conceive and mould?”

“My brain, great King, is now grown old;
And builders boast to vie with me.
Yet while are marble, gems, and gold,
I could rebuild the towers you see,

The Far Away

Or match them elsewhere equally."
"Then, Isa, I'll not trust your power,
But it shall die with you this hour.
Leap from the rock, that you may tell
If genius in the Jumna dwell!"
They cast him down the mangling steep;
Yet at the verge he paused to call
An execration, strange and deep,
Upon the Emperor and them all.

The sun a circlet seemed of gold,
As down the western heaven he rolled,
Till, close above the palace come,
He turned to blood that golden dome.
"Blood of the grape," Shah Jahan said.
"Now let the banquet meats be spread."
The mounting moon for many an hour
Hung pale above the illumined show,
But spilled across the dome a shower
Of crimson light on walls like snow.
"Go drape the dome with hangings," cried
Jahan, to shield his shuddering bride.
Fabrics of every hue they brought,
And over all the gilding hung.
Yet every thread was strangely wrought
To crimson, while the Empress clung

In terror to her lord. "Bring down,
And let the cloth be shown," he cried.
One brought, and from the curtain wrung
Hot blood, that dripping earthward dyed
The marble red. With ominous frown,
Jahan bade all the feasting end,
And each to his own chamber wend.

All sound of song and lute grew still;
The moon and stars alone gave light,
Till vapours shrouded round that hill,
And ponderous plumes obscured the night—
Till cedar shade and marble wall
Lay black beneath the enfolding pall.
Yet always heavier and more cold
Dank death-fogs from the Jumna rolled.

With earliest dawn, when all men slept,
An army round the palace crept,
Led by a brother's son exiled.
No hindering hand opposed their way
Among the gardens arched and aisled;
None at the portal bade them stay.
Now over all a horror fell,
Bred of the silent river's spell
Which overhead in fog-damp wreathed.

The Far Away

The curtains in cold fear they drew—
Yet found no human form that breathed.
On every couch a corpse reposed
Of tortured mein and hideous hue.
Each staring brow a stain disclosed,
From eye to eye, of purple blood.
Speechless the shuddering soldiers stood,
Then fled like madmen, heedless where,
With groans of mingled curse and prayer.

Slow crumbled into ruin then
The imperial palace, banned of men,
Over whose every spire gloat
The fogs which from the Jumna float.
No beast nor fowl that haunts the hall
Returns to mingle with its kind;
The power of its curse kills all
That enter—even the formless wind.

THE MOURNERS

POPLARS bend;
The chill wind lashes by,
Dropless, though never dry,
In the dull day's end.
The woodland sways
With stride funereal, hued
Sombre and brown and deep,
In mourning rude.
The bough that earthward sways
Swings like a censer. Weep
Majestic mourners vast
The enshrouded sun.
Now tune they in the blast
An olden chant—all primal woes in one.

REST NOT!

I WANDER in the forest shade;
I hearken how the starward pine
Sighs to the veery's serenade;
And I dream that a hermit's soul is mine,
To frown like the mountains, lone and free.
But a rumble of cities reaches me,
And a warning cry
On the wind wails by—
"Rest not! Rest not! Sloth like a pall
Over the dreamer of dreams shall fall."

I walk where the blind and sobbing waves,
Breaking, shudder upon the shore;
They whisper woe to a heart that craves,
And all is gone which was mine before.
But a ship of foam drifts by on the sea,
Whose phantom helmsman beckons me;
And a warning cry
On the wind wails by—
"Rest not! Rest not! Sloth like a pall
Over the dreamer of dreams shall fall."

MYSTERY

LIKE whispering lips of love does mystery
Allure me in dim woods to walk alone,
And wade the many-shadowed marshes strewn
With fallen leaves of ages, where I see
Fresh vistas veiled and darkened, tempting me.
It creeps upon old towers overthrown,
Entwining in the ivies, and thence blown,
It loads the breezes with solemnity.

Its murmurings and the magic of its power,
Rung through the arches of my brain, release
The portals to all passion and excess;
Yet even over that tumultuous hour
It circles me in wingèd watchfulness
To whisper that the child of strife is peace.

THE GOAL OF THE STARS

UNDER the wings of the crimson west
Slumbers a city of gold—
Over the last blue mountain crest,
Where the sun and the moon sink down to rest,
And whither the stars are rolled.

I have seen it glimmer amid the glow
Of many a purple eve;
Its banners in the wind aflow
Blend with the clouds that westward go,
The curtain of night to weave.

Dome and turret and gilded spire,
As I have seen them do,
Borrow the sun's and the moon's pale fire
To blazon a goal of our desire
For things far off and new.

When all the love has been loved away,
All life's wandering done,
I'll seek my city of gold some day—
Seek in its towers these years that stray
Through the gold of the setting sun.

POET'S PRAYER

STRIKE gently, world, upon this lyre;
With tempered finger sweep the strings.
For they have borne thy thunderings
Long, till the fibres yield and tire.

Through some more ponderous frame reveal
The power of thy perfervent tone;
Reserve to loftier themes alone
The harp that can too keenly feel.

Strike gently, or thy stroke will flaw
The fabric, and the frail sides break.
So shall thy hand no sounds awake,
Nor from the strewn shards music draw.

Yet if thy force no prayer can stay,
Then render one vast pæan rude
To shake the stellar solitude,
And after—cast this lyre away.

HARMONIES

I HARKENED to sweet harmonies; a flute
Soared and was lonely, till the cello rose,
As a deep, mournful wind of autumn blows,
Bore up the wistful burden; in pursuit,
Quavering wildly and irresolute,
Sobbed out the unimaginable woes
That over all the world men's hearts enclose,
Sank in a mist of sorrow, and was mute.

Still with clear tones, in flawless melody,
Of hope and beauty, summer and the dawn
The flute insistent told; a moment brief
The rich, resurgent cello's chastened grief
Blended those strains to one pure ecstasy.
Gladness and woe were one, when both had
gone.

IMMORTALITY

OUR life is like a drop of dew
Condensed a moment from the universe,
That, when its course of hours is through,
The air takes back in vapour—no whit worse.

ROSALIE

THROUGH mystic lands and olden
To the sea,
A river flows in golden,
Rippling glee.
Dark cypress veils the velvet shore,
With ferns and purple flowers before,
While overhead the whitest cloudlets soar.

I lie dreaming on the brink
Of that river, and I drink
A palmful as it passes by
Wrinkling the reflected sky.
Then swiftly over all my senses steal
The peace and calm of Lethe, and I feel
No care, nor pain, nor woe;
For through my spirit flow
Delights that satisfy, and joys that heal.

Those magic waters, Rosalie,
Are what your lips might mean to me;
In their murmurings I hear
A voice like yours—so soothing clear.

The Far Away

15

I see in every shadowed pool,
Where the leaves hang low and cool,
 The lovely gleaming of your eyes;
 The sunlight on that river vies
With the lustre of your love.

 I arise,
And wonder if the clouds that drift above
Could half contain the measure of my soul
If my heart touched the hem of yours, and was
 made whole.

WHAT LOVE IS

OH, love is like a flower
That withers fast away;
Enduring for an hour—
Remembered many a day.

And love is like a reed
Beside the river grown,
Which, though still waters feed,
By the flood is overthrown.

Or like a cloud-fire burning
Across the crimson west,
Which sombre night returning
Chills in her joyless breast.

But love is like a reef
In chartless ocean laid,
Where none foreknow their grief,
Nor comfort is, nor aid.

LOVE AND SORROW

MAIDEN born with wailing
And in laughter bred,
Sorrow unavailing
Circles round your head.

Powerless to harm you
Chance and malice fall
Until love disarm you,
Stern, imperial.

Love that lures with laughter,
Scorner of the strong,
Yields you sorrow after—
Tunes the parting song.

All your joyance, maiden,
Love will drown in tears.
Sombre, weary-laden,
Drift the youthless years.

As you laugh tomorrow
If today you mourn,
So of singing sorrow—
Grief of joy—is born.

THE HEART OF MAN

I LOOKED within Melise's eyes,
And her lips need not have spoken;
For a lightning-swift surmise
Told me that her oath was broken.
Dimly from the sunless skies
Of the world of dreams that heart deep in me lies,
Drifted a sea-gull's cries.

She lifted my limp hand—
I felt the whirling sand;
The purple lightning shook on high and fell
Over that inner land,
And the dull peal pleased me well.

Parted her lips to speak.
I heard the mystic shriek
Of sea-wild wind, the roar
That waves wring from a far, storm-shaken shore.
The frightened sea-gull screamed once more.

“To you I have come home.”
My heart was filled with foam;
My eyes were blind with flying spray,

For the waves shook the vault of day;
The shivering gull by the gale was borne away
Wailing amid the driven foam flakes gray.

“Forgive me, Love!”

The thunder clouds above
Rifted; the wind roared less.
Again she spoke, and strove
To kiss my hand in humbleness.

The surf of that inward sea
Fell sullenly and slow.
Melise was whispering low,
And the storm waned in me.
The far-off thunder of waves was hushed
In the beating of her heart;
The wind no longer rushed
On that strand where the land of the mind
And the sea of passions part.
The waters smiled and were kind;
The gull returned to its nest;
While to my breast
The slender body of Melise I pressed.

SOLACE

MAIDEN out of the East,
Fountain of blushes and sighs,
Sit you down at my feast
That I may fathom your eyes.

Meat and bread without end,
Wine and honey and curd
Are piled till my tables bend;
More I can bring with a word.

Nothing lacks but the soul—
Need have I only of you,
Your wrist encircling the bowl
Just as my fingers do.

Sit you down at my feast.
Deep in your radiant eyes,
Maiden out of the East,
Spell me the healing of sighs.

Laugh the light of your ways
Into my life-road wan;
Turn my evening of days
Back to the glow of dawn.

FLOWERS

I WOULD walk with you today
In the budded woods of May—
 Hunt the flowers in fairy-ring
 Under beech leaves fluttering,
 Harboured in the arms of spring.

I would watch their petals fall
At your touch ethereal;
 So your petals soon may be
 Riven to eternity
 By an infant entity.

As your light and heedless tread
Bows the fragile violet's head,
 So an unborn foot may bruise
 That which I most fear to lose—
 Your life—yet we cannot choose.

As these flowers withering
Stud the dales another spring,
 So do maiden flowrets new
 Grow as their own mothers grew,
 Till they wed and bloom like you.

The Far Away

Fleeting as the flowers are we—
Nor more lasting need we be;
Each May, like the May before,
There are flowers enough and more.
In a brimming bowl we pour.

LYSIA

LYSIA, wait the golden day;
Vanish not so soon away!

Let no lip
Any word of parting say.

Has she hearkened? Lies she so,
Musing joys of long ago?

Whispered she
In the tones of angels, "No?"

Lysia, when our bridal morn
Of the eastern sea is born,

You shall rise
And with pearls your breast adorn.

Smiling, see, she parts her eyes,
Where the black lash silken lies;

Closes now—
Listen well how soft she sighs!

Lysia, live but one day more!
Love, for pity must restore

To your cheek
All the glow which once it wore.

The Far Away

But your hand is cold as snow.
Oh my bride, how pale you grow!
Now your lips
Nevermore my kiss may know.

YEW

Yew at the head—
Dark yew, and her tresses were gold;
Her tresses of old
Were yellow, and glimmered like gold.
This tree of the dead
Rains gloom from its boughs on the mould—
On the marble and mould.

Cold, cold
On her breast,
That was whiter than marble of old,
White marbles rest—
White with a glimmer of gold,
Not from the setting sun
Low in the west,
But shining up from the mould
Where she lies so cold
With the golden hair spread over her breast—
Her breast that gleamed in the sun
So long ago.
Yew and marble and gold,

And her tale is told.
Filled is the world with woe;
For long ago,
Before her sleep with the dead,
She shone like marble and gold—
Now she lies in the mould
With yew at her head.

THE WARDER

GROANING tholes and a great, gray sail,
Flicker of arms on the flashing oar—
One long dragon, astride the gale,
Clove its road to the Irish shore—
Valdar, king of the wintry seas,
And a bold crew over the billows bore.

Mighty men of the north were they,
And every law of the Viking kept—
Never had wiled a night away
With woman's love, had never wept,
Turned a furrow, nor garnered corn,
Nor under a sooty rafter slept.
Valdar the rude had further sworn
All his days on the sea to fare;
Or, if he trod the earth at morn,
To slay the man who should meet him there,
And while the sun yet soared in air,
Betake him back to his vessel fair.

The Far Away

Black the glittering headland lay
Aflare and afitter with flying mews;
Where the rowers, with cracking thews,
Sped beyond to a rippled bay;
High on the beach then bore their prow,
And strode with rattling swords away.
Under the crag's deep-furrowed brow
The cave of Acharn yawned aghast—
Hollow hill of the Druid's vow,
Filled with gold from the fabled past.
Its fame afar in the north had flown;
Tales of the hoarded treasure vast,
Kept by an old gray priest alone—
Warded there by a toothless sage
With white hair down to his girdle grown,
His body shrunken to hide and bone.

At Valdar's feet a bard now fell,
A Druid seer skilled in runes.
"Wild sea king I wish thee well.
Heed the chants and charnel tunes
Over Acharn sung of old—
Dark magic under waning moons.
Who goes in quest of Acharn's gold,
Oh Valdar, shall come forth no more."
Hearing, the Viking's heart grew cold;

He faltered at the cavern door;
Cursed the gold he had ventured for.
Yet, proud and fearless, faced the men
Who moved in muttering crowds amazed.
"Tarry till I return again!"
He shouted; then with red torch raised,
Passed the gate, while his rowers gazed.

Into the darkness dank and chill
The sea king strode, with keen sword drawn,
Ready to harry the Druid hill.
Dark as the night that knows no dawn
His wraith-beleaguered roadway lay—
Path amid ghosts of days ago.
On he strode—a weary way,
Ever alert with lifted sword;
Yet found no foeman there to slay,
Nor rings nor gems nor treasure hoard,
Nor any bearded priest at ward.

Then Valdar turned, with gathering wrath
At foiled desire and labour vain—
Beheld a white thing in his path,
That swayed—that seemed to writhe in pain;
Whimpered, beginning to complain;

"Seaman, wilt thou slay me now?

Here have I roamed a hundred years.

I see upon thine angry brow

The sure fulfilment of my fears."

Then thundered Valdar, "Thou shalt die,

Frail as thou art, for all thy tears,

Unless thou leadest me where lie

The rings unnumbered of red gold."

"Lend me the torch that flares so high."

"I'll bear the light; for thou art old."

"But let me touch thy foot, oh king.

Even here thy wondrous deeds are told."

Valdar laughed to hear this thing;

But at his feet the white priest fell

Or ever the man aside could spring;

Caught the ankle—gripped it well,

The while he uttered a direful spell.

"Valdar, I have given thee

My task of warding the Druid store.

Through all thy lifetime yet to be,

Thou shalt see the light no more,

But dwell in the Hill of Acharn's core."

So to the rowers watching there

A broken voice at evening came—

"Ye who seaward yet may fare,
Go tell the ending of my fame;
For I am bound by Druid rune
To live my life in this hill of shame—
A night with neither stars nor moon;
Now nevermore to sail the sea,
But in this blackness bleach and swoon,
Until some king shall conquer me,
Suffer the wardship, set me free."

The sea king sobbed and broke in tears—
He who had wept not through all his years.

THE VIKINGS

THE surf is roaring on the skerry;
The wind is up, and old Ægir is merry
Where he sits in the deep and sees our keel
Cleaving the foam; for his daughters run
Hand in hand, with their streaming hair
White on the gale, while their shoulders bare
Urge the good ship to a hidden shoal.
The arms that the daughters of Ægir fling
Around us are not like the arms at home
Of the maids we have kissed in the mead hall there,
And their voices are not like those that sing
Our deeds where the Viking hearth fire glows.
They rush to their rest on skerry and crag.
But our ship is built with oaken beams;
The Vikings laugh when the storm wind blows.
And bitterly though the waves may bite,
Our dragon will ride the billows light.
We will not sleep with Ægir tonight.

SLOTH

I HAVE lain asleep,

While the pageant of life swept, glorified,
Over tilled plain and rock-torn steep.

While the vistas of the world rolled wide
I have lain asleep.

Burdened with sleep,

I have seen the sun pulsate at noon—
Felt dimly the vacant hours creep;

For my heavy eyes closed over-soon,
Burdened with sleep.

In a languid sleep

Have I lingered while others scanned the sky,
Or fathomed the rich, phosphoric deep;

So, losing earth's wonders, I ever lie
In a languid sleep.

I have spent in sleep

The springtime of thought, the season of youth,
When the blood in my listless veins should leap.

Those hours men use in seeking truth
I have spent in sleep.

Swooning with sleep,

The harvest of knowledge and love and gold
Has found me careless who might reap,
Or whether winter approached me, cold,
Swooning with sleep.

Sated with sleep,

I dreamed of work, where the sun shone hot—
That I shared in the great world's onward sweep—
As though I had been awake, and not
Sated with sleep.

Drenched in dull sleep,

When I waked, when I saw how dream-wrought
toil
Is waste, I have turned back lest I weep
From disappointment and day's turmoil,
Drenched in dull sleep.

In a stagnant sleep,

Must my eyes be sealed, so I never may know
That the myriad beauty of earth is cheap
For him who will see? Shall my soul die so,
In a stagnant sleep?

As I lie asleep,

 Could some carven rune on the Druid's tree
Be read, and unbar my opiate keep?

 Or can no voice ever awaken me
As I lie asleep?

PURPOSE

WHEN may the soul yield, or a man's free will
Bow down to chance, or time's insistence kill
His pride to wage with fate a lifelong war?
When the sea rests and the wheeling stars are still;
When the rude, lonely night-wind moans no more.

When shall my heart no longer leap and thrill
At dreaming of the distant? When shall chill
This lust of change that lights the far-off shore?
When the wind rests and the wheeling stars are still;
When the green, labouring ocean moans no more.

THE POWER OF HOME

AWAY! Far out in the world away!

Follow a thousand roads

From the dawn to the purpling pyres of day,

Wherever this longing goads!

Where the hearts of men and of nations are,

There pathless, like a falling star

Wander afar!

But I stand amazed in the doorway still

To dream of the world from my native hill,

For I must not cross the sill.

The earth spreads wide before my feet

Till the oceans eat the shore,

While over it all the storm-clouds fleet,

And the wind moans evermore;

And above the winds the deep stars burn,

Watching the driven planets turn,

While I yearn.

But I stand amazed in the doorway still

To dream of the world from my native hill,

For I must not cross the sill.

DISILLUSION

My boyhood dreamed the evening wind that blew
From the far-flaring burial of day
Had searched the haunts of nymph and mountain
fay

For vigour of the hills and cooling dew.
I thought the meditating ocean drew
Its shattered breakers, from their foam and spray,
To silent glades where purple seaweeds sway,
Where all things rest and weave their strength
anew.

But now the sea flows from the sea. Its waves
Lapse back to be upraised and break again.
The winds that breathe and eddy round me,
steal

Into no grottoes—from no magic caves.
Enough that now the breeze can cool me when
It whispers, and the sea's proud tumult heal.

THE TIDE

I LISTEN to the lapping of the tide upon the shore,
To the murmur of each weak, unwilling wave;
The voices, as of women, that warn forevermore
A bold sea lover from his coral grave.

I listen to the lapping of the rising tide of years,
The sigh of men that sink beneath its surge;
And wave by wave that rhythmic line with its
foaming minutes nears.

Into a mist the forms about me merge.

But the tide that knows no ebbing creeps across
the dunes of youth,
Rolls calm and ruthless over manhood's plains;
It beats upon the hills of age, and the mountain
cliffs uncouth,
Till only the cold, snow-haired peak remains.

And still faint voices sighing, as of women, haunt
the wind—

Still whisper of a grave beneath the sea;
But now their dreary accents turn to mellow tones
and kind,
Telling how restful will that slumber be.

THE HILLS OF HOME

THEY loom in green and silver gray
Among the clouds at dawn;
They wither in the west away,
After the sun has gone
With crimson yawn.

The whippoorwills at evening wail
Among their furrowed pines,
While spectral mists astride the gale,
Wherethrough the pale moon shines,
Weave cryptic lines.

A gale-borne eagle screams the noon
Above some flowerless crag;
Under the sun white beeches swoon;
The boughs of hemlock sag,
And mouldward drag.

Oh laughless are the lone, wan hills,
Solemn the reeling sky;
The thrush in awe and longing trills;
Of ages long gone by
The night-owls cry.

I crouch among the crowds of men.

I laugh; I take my scars,

Until this soul is freed again,

To stand beneath the stars

No laughter mars—

To climb once more in sombre joy

The mountain's utmost comb;

Eternally, as when a boy,

Both day and night to roam

The Hills of Home.

TO A HERMIT THRUSH

PRIMEVAL joy and crystal pain

Poured down the forest arches high,
What maiden grief, her loved one slain,
With thy clear elegy can vie?
Oh wherefore mourn, and why?

What martyr, to the lions hurled,
Who rose with ecstasy to sing
In psalms the glory of the world,
Unshamed could hear thine anthem ring?
Earth needs thy hallowing.

Who, by love's solemn rapture wrought
To more than mortal melody,
Climbed ever in his noblest thought,
As high as that sweet fervency
Which leaps to heaven from thee?

I falter mid the fragrant fern.
Dead leaves, with deathless vines enlaced,
Where sparks of slanting sunbeam burn,
Yield under; while by boughs embraced,
Thou, singing, stillest this waste.

No sighing of the pines I hear;
 All silent swirls the river brown.
 Alone, from some far bower, thy clear,
 Upsoaring bells of song peal down
 On echoes of their own.

All beauteous Nature speaks in thee.
 When soon the axe of man shall mar
 These pillars of thy temple free,
 Thy voice will bring the evening star
 In fairer lands afar.

For this doth sorrow blend thy song?
 That avarice and witless power
 Should scourge the lap of earth so long,
 Lay ages waste with every hour,
 And envy thee thy bower?

Transcendent dreamer, self exiled,
 How in this woodland couldst thou learn
 That men forsook the uncut wild
 Without their will—in silence yearn
 Forever to return?

Now mad with war and drunk with wine,
 Their sodden hearts no longer heed

If this unrivalled song of thine
Be stilled at last, to whet the greed
Of those who nothing need.

Could all men hear thee as I hear,
Voicing the joys of æons flown,
Couldst thou so pour in every ear
Thy soul, wreathed through each crystal tone—
Oh Earth, take back thine own!

LEAF-GOLD

WHEN winter's hoarding fingers melt, when flowers
From mellowed gold of autumn's coinage rise—
When Earth with treasure of November buys
Her silken blooms of April—blend the hours
Of wakefulness and slumber. Sun and showers,
Forgotten and remembered things, surprise
Each other momentarily. In everywise
The gold of days gone by, Earth spends on ours.

We start at visions of an age untold,
That nameless monsters howl the wind adown.
Among the pines a panting chase. The fen
Reeks bitter for a lurking fear of old.

Unnumbered years are with us. Hearts of men
The Earth still buys with wildwood mintage
brown.

THE ISLE

A LITTLE hour of sleep,
A folding of the hands;
The surge of death shall weep
On life's too yielding sands.

While visions glance and go—
Eyes down bend to pray,
A wind of chance shall blow
Life's fairest rose away.

Isle of spice and bloom,
Isle of darkness dread,
The sun leaps out from gloom
To light your warder—dead.

Bow the head in dreams!
Fold the hands awhile!
For long that sunlight gleams
Upon life's laughing isle.

Long the shadows brood
Through every fearful glade.
Beside the billows rude,
Must all at last be laid.

Sleep a little hour!

Then let the morning show
Its ravished wreath and flower,
Or heedless head laid low.

Among the spice and bloom,
If darkness meet with death,
All fragrant is the tomb—
And sweet the parting breath.

The surf may thunder on,
The winds of chance still blow—
A hundred years or one,
There is not far to go.

THE PALACE OF MIST

KNOCK no longer vainly
At the palace door.
They have heard you plainly—
Therefore knock no more.

Hand of mortal never
Shall throw back the bar;
Lock and bolt and lever
Rust encrusted are;
And a king's endeavour
Were too feeble far.

Cease your clamour straightway—
From your siege desist.
Turn you from the gateway
Of the Hall of Mist.

For there is no ending
Of life's futile coil.
See! The same sky bending
Over tilth and toil,
Warms a wanderer's wending
On far, foreign soil.

See! The same wind chills them,
 Labouring or lost;
The same longing fills them
 With the same mistrust.

Fled are life and labour
 In the end of days—
Stilled the flute and tabour—
 Perished he who plays.
Sings the cold, keen sabre
 After songs of praise.

So the tomb of glory
 At whose gate you cry—
Palace high and hoary—
 Ruined soon will lie.

What you so desire,
 Death alone can give.
From the Palace dire,
 Phantom, fugitive,
From your chosen pyre,
 Turn you back, and live!

THE CROSS

A SHADOW on the moonlit road—
The shadow of a cross I see.
Is here the hill, as signs forebode,
Called Calvary?

Hangs all the bleeding hope of men
Along its shaft in agony?
Must needs the curse descend again
On Calvary?

What sorrows by that cross are borne!
What sufferings nursed in secrecy!
What hands are lifted, weak and worn,
From Calvary!

Beneath the moon this shadow falls
On every hill from sea to sea;
And every groaning road Truth calls
A Calvary.

Of all the burden that men bear,
A shadow shall the symbol be—

The cross of poverty and care—
New Calvary.

For now in every land oppressed,
Where man and beast once wandered free,
The cross transforms each ridge and crest
To Calvary.

Now every hour a Christ is sold
For thirty pieces, secretly;
Now liberty is given for gold,
At Calvary.

From where that shadow floating lies
Across the roadway, mistily,
Unto the moon I lift my eyes,
O'er Calvary.

The crucifixion sways aloft,
While through its wires of perfidy
A south wind blows with moanings soft
For Calvary.

THE VAULT OF YEARS

DOWN to the vault of years, the burial vault,
The charnel of the ages, far I fell—
Deep downward plunged, the seeker of dead years.
Oh pity the old years that stain the west
With bleeding hands clutched over the wide sky
To stay the sun. Oh futile hands that bleed!
Pity the years! Infuriate I fell
Below the crimson æons of the evening,
And dashed through night eternal to the gate
That swallows up the ages. Dimly towered
Those portals high aloft between the stars
Of nether constellations; pale as dawn
They hung unopening till the brood of time
Once more should waver downward through the
 night
For burial. I wrestled with the warder
Until the pallid substance of his limbs
Dissolved before my fury, and he fell,
Slow, shadowy, vast. The portals with his falling
Swayed, and like mist before the morning wind
Bore inward wavering—league on pillared league

Among the stars high-hovering swung, till wide
The gateway arched in glimmering vacancy.
Pity the banished years! Unnumbered there
They floated foamlike, intermingling forms—
No more with bleeding fingers now; all blanched
From filtering through the mazes of the stars,
Shadows of spirit-substances I saw,
Among which, countless, formless, featureless,
How might I choose my own? The love-crowned
 hours,
The days of warmest joy, the months remembered,
The years with what fond dreams—cold—cold!
Dead are the years. Kiss not their frozen lips!
Their multitudes were nameless, and I knew
Not even one. Wide Universe, wherein
Our tiny gyring earth circles the sun
Unheeded, what are years? A wind arose
Out of the charnel, mightier than the blasts
Of myriad hurricanes; its bellowings
But whispered through those portals, yet I heard
The words of buried ages from the vault—
“All things forget; for Man alone remembers.”

**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

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